



**emerson**  
**theatre**  
**company**

Emerson Theatre  
Company  
130 Beacon Street  
Boston, Massachusetts 02116

William L. Sharp, *Department Chairman*

A. D. Sensenbach, *Director of Graduate Studies*

Al Corona, *Acting*  
Herb Propper, *Acting*  
Naomi Thornton, *Acting*  
Shirley Nemetz-Ress, *Acting*  
Vincent Murphy, *Acting*  
Steve Wangh, *Acting*

Steve Weinstein, *Movement*

Michael Anania, *Scenic Design*  
Mary Thomasine Harkins, *Costume Design*  
Catherine Szari, *Costume Shop Supervisor*

Bob Martin, *Technical Director*

Michael Bush, *Publicity*

Tobie S. Stein, *Box Office-House Manager*  
Jean Lenville, *Box Office-House Manager*

Andrea Sragg, *Secretary to the Department*

I'd like to see you both and everyone of you to tonight's performance

of "Mad Mad Times". This performance is dedicated to you! Please enjoy—

After please fill out the survey below, it will help us improve our public relations.

*Tobie A. Hewitt, Fibre Manager*

How long have you attended Emerson?

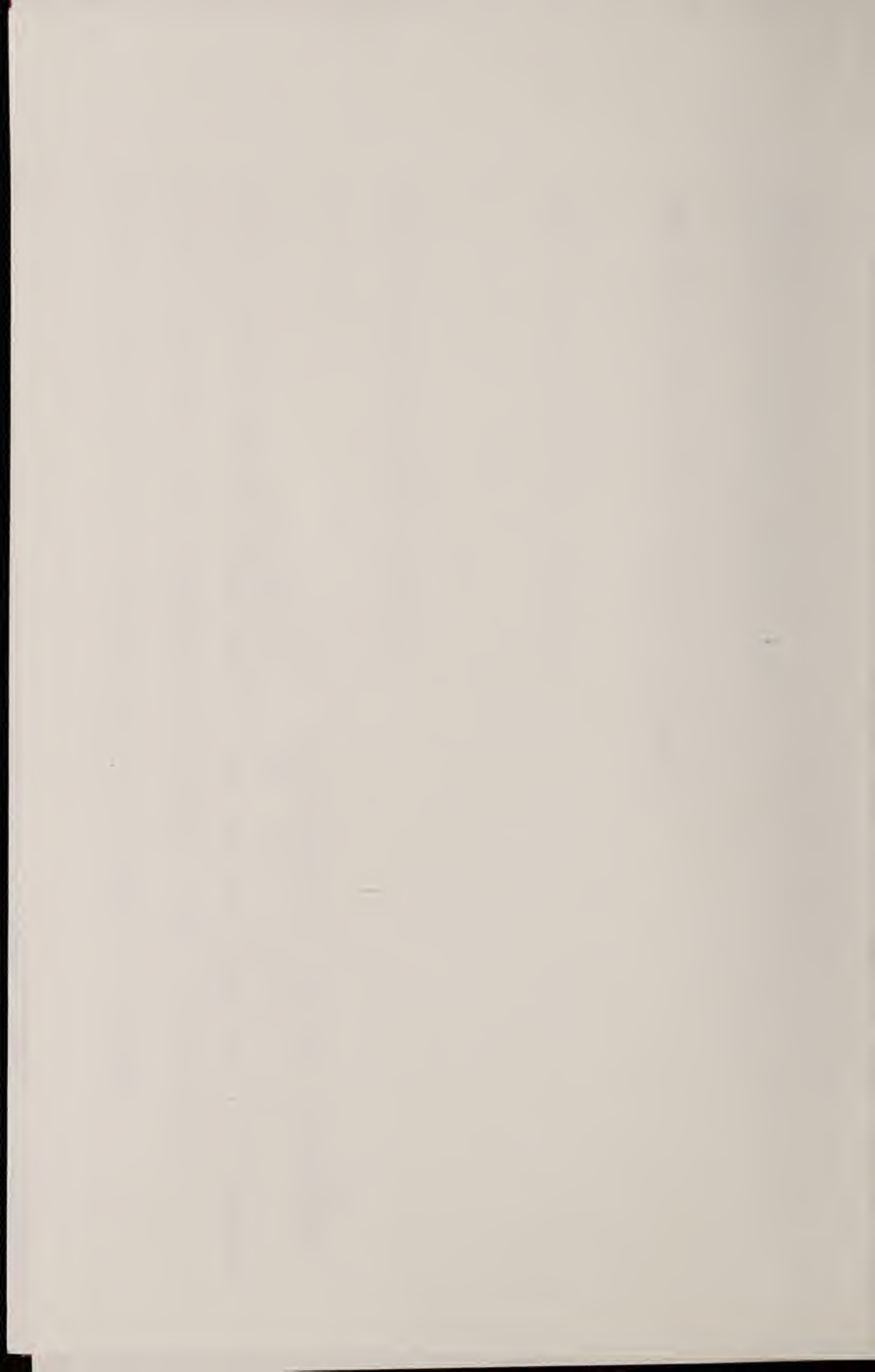
What is the name of your department?

How did you learn about tonight's performance?

Have you attended this theatre before?

Do you feel the location of the theatre is well publicized?

What types of shows would you like to see presented here?





# The Importance of Being Earnest

A Play in Three Acts

by

Oscar Wilde

March 30 thru April 9

Directed by

A. D. Sensenbach

Scenery by

Michael Anania

Costumes by

Mary Thomasine Harkins

Lighting by

Bob Martin

Technical Director

Bob Martin

Production Stage Manager

Kevin J. Larkin

Stage Managers

Peter B. Carzasty

Hans O.W. Moland

**The Characters**  
(in the order of their appearance)

Lane, manservant to Mr. Moncrieff ..... Stephen DeFrancesco  
Mr. Algernon Moncrieff ..... Andrew A. Palmer  
Mr. John Worthing, J.P. .... Charles Hall  
Lady Augusta Bracknell. .... Cornelia Stryker  
The Hon. Miss Gwendolen Fairfax ..... Lisa Faith Katze  
Miss Laetitia Prism, governess to Miss Cardew... Armanda Famiglietti  
Miss Cecily Cardew, Mr. Worthing's ward ..... Carol A. Graham  
The Rev. Canon Fredrick Chasuble, D.D. .... Ralph Borrelli  
Merriman, butler at the Manor House ..... John L. Gilson  
Footman at the Manor House ..... Kevin Larkin

**ACT I**

The drawing-room in Algernon's flat on Half-Moon Street, London, England, at about five o'clock on a Friday afternoon in the summer of 1895.

**INTERMISSION**

**ACT II**

The next afternoon in the garden of The Manor House, Woolton, Hertfordshire.

**INTERMISSION**

**ACT III**

Immediately following

## About tonight's play. . .

It was St. Valentine's Day, February 14th; the year was 1895. On that particular night London was in the grip of a blizzard, but that did not keep the audience from crowding into St. James' Theatre. Curiosity and expectation ran high about the new play which was to have its first performance. For London this was a special "opening night" because the playwright was Oscar Fingal O'Flahertie Wills Wilde, that brilliant and outrageous Irishman, the delight of literary and artistic circles in England, America and on the Continent. His play was *The Importance of Being Earnest*, subtitled *A Trivial Comedy for Serious People* (or was it a serious play for trivial people?). In any case, as things turned out, it was this play which primarily was to become the basis for Wilde's popularity and enduring fame.

In *uncharacteristic* fashion, Wilde had had little to say publicly about his new work. Some weeks earlier, when asked by a journalist what sort of play it was to be and whether it would be a success, Wilde quipped that, "The play *is* success; the only question is whether the first night's audience will be one." He was right about the play, of course, but the audience was also a success, and enormously so. The snowstorm howled outside the theatre, but inside the delighted audience drowned out the storm with its own gales of laughter. Wilde was at his best; he was by turns urbanely witty, satirically devastating and typically paradoxical. Even such august critics as William Archer and the young H.G. Wells were enthusiastic. Apparently there was only one dissenter in the crowd, George Bernard Shaw, not yet a playwright himself. In his review Shaw complained that the piece was "old fashioned," typical of comedies of the Seventies, while this was the Nineties. He noted that, while it had amused him, it had failed to "touch" him. In fact, to him it seemed sufficiently "inhuman" to be the brain-child of W.S. Gilbert, whose operetta libretti had won delighted audiences for the past twenty years without feeling obliged to be soberly "true-to-life" and modernly "realistic."

Wilde had written the play in three weeks during the previous autumn, while on holiday with his wife and sons, at Worthing, a seaside resort in Sussex. His motives were purely mercenary, he admitted. A play, "by a butterfly for butterflies," he'd called it, and to a friend he wrote that it was, "...exquisitely trivial, a delicate bubble of fancy, and it has its philosophy." Later he stated its philosophy: "We should treat all the trivial things of life seriously, and all the serious things of life with sincere and studied triviality." He also spoke of it as being a "high comedy." Could he have known that today it is usually referred to as "a farce," Wilde would doubtless have retorted virgorously.

The play's plot is, of course, ludicrous, as in farce, but its humor is intellectual, rather than physical, and its language is superbly polished, rather than crude. The characters are neither simplistic nor grotesque, as would be the case if this were a farce; they are simply liberated, if rather eccentric, non-conformists. Most importantly, the standards and values reflected in the action and dialogue are precise inversions of what it is *customary* at least to espouse in social situations. Wilde's systematic "topsy-turveydom" at first shocks and then delights the audience; ultimately it provokes thoughtful examination of cliché thinking and behaving in the "real" world as we still are experiencing it eighty-three years later. These are both the method and the goal of high comedy, and they link Wilde to John Gay, William Congreve, Shaw, Maugham and Coward, all of whom, without either sentimentality or emotional appeals, have made us laugh at what in our "hearts" we recognize to be the truth about human beings and their social worlds.



## Production Staff

Set Designer .....	Michael Anania
Costume Designer .....	Mary Thomasine Harkins
Lighting Designer .....	Bob Martin
Technical Director .....	Bob Martin
Production Stage Manager .....	Kevin Larkin
Stage Managers .....	Peter Carzasty, Hans Moland
Assistant to Stage Designer .....	Ann Howell
Assistant to Costume Designer .....	Chad Shipley
Assistant to Lighting Designer .....	Laura L. Cowell
Master Electrician .....	Peter Zageski
Prop Master .....	Emily Breeden, Stephen Gambino
Sound .....	Brett Nolte, Rolf Solstad
Assistant to Technical Director .....	Susan DeCausemaker
Master Carpenter .....	Simon Volpini
Assistant to Master Carpenter .....	Luce Dionne
Assistant to Prop Master .....	Mark Overton
Costumiere .....	Catherine Szari
Draper .....	Kay Haskell
Milliner .....	Judi Holmes
Textile Artist .....	Chad Shipley
Make-up .....	Kay Haskell, Bobbi Brown
Accessories Master .....	Joanna Bodenweber

### Costume Construction

Patricia Barker, Suzy Donahue, Ina Buckner, Andrew Palmer, Karen DePolito, Jean Lenville, Mary Carey, John Hollick, Janet Whitman, Carol Graham, Marilyn Margolis-Knapp

### Set Construction Crew

Emily Breeden, Carol Charnou, Ann Howell, Tama Natkin, Brett Nolte, Rolf Solstad, Peter Zageski, Melissa Becker, Michael Kondrat, Arlene Mantek, Laura Cowell, Stephen Gambino, Mark Overton, William Smith, Charles Bellardinelli

### Work Study Assistants

Jane Bouman, Susan DeCausemaker, Luce Dionne, Madeleine Dubroff, Ray Ganslaves, Mike Kondrat, Mark Overton, Matt Shannon

### Light Run Crew

Kathy Papa, Carole Charnow  
and the students of TA103

Diction Coach .....

Stephen DeFrancesco

### Special Thanks to:

Kathleen Dahill, Emerson College Music Department, Mrs. June Hamblin Mitchell, Miss Marcia Reiber, Beth Schneider, and Tufts Arena Theater  
Mr. and Mrs. James Peckham



Emerson Theatre Company  
1977 – 1978 Season

*A Streetcar Named Desire* – Tennessee Williams  
October 12 – 16, 18 – 22

*Caligula* – Albert Camus  
November 9 – 13, 16 – 20

*The Importance of Being Earnest* – Oscar Wilde  
March 8 – 12, 15 – 19

*Mad Dog Blue's* – Sam Shepard  
April 26 – 30, May 3 – 7

LOFT PRODUCTIONS (69 Brimmer Street)

*Facing Death* – Johan August Strindberg  
October 27, 28, 29

Production to be announced – December 8, 9, 10

Production to be announced – March 6, 7, 8

Production to be announced – May 11, 12, 13

Please do not eat or drink in this theatre.  
The taking of pictures is prohibited.  
Smoking is not permitted in the Theatre.



**emerson college**

**130 beacon street**

**boston**